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The Encyclical and Modernist Theology

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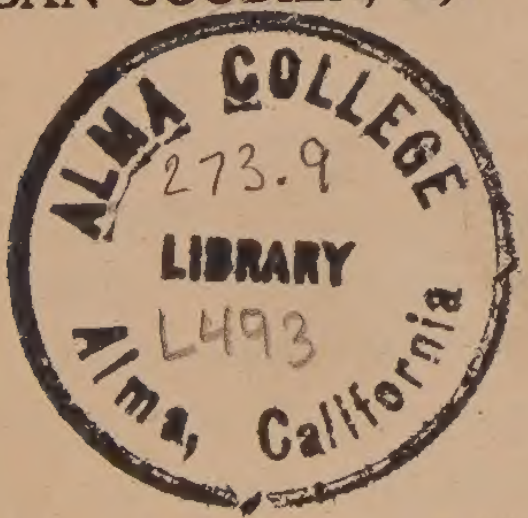

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Preface

In a brief study such as the present, to draw out the Modernist Theology in all its completeness, to trace it to its sources, and to define its bearing, would be obviously impossible. For that a large work would be required; one, it may be hoped, which others will undertake. My aim is more moderate. It is to help Catholics to understand the words of the Pope, and to grasp the nature and gravity of the questions that gather round them. Modernism is no mere lecture-room heresy with which only professors need be occupied; it is a new setting of Christianity, at once undermining the very foundations of the ancient structure of the faith, and claiming to rebuild it after a new design.

I am conscious that the sketch here given

has been rapidly drawn, and that long dissertations would be required to put in their full light the problems touched upon. The urgency of the work must be my excuse. In a time of keen conflict there is no great need to make one's work complete; if it be loyal and Christian, that must suffice.

In explaining the Modernist teaching special use has been made of the *Programma dei Modernisti*, recently published in answer to the Encyclical, and of the different writings of Fr. Tyrrell. I might easily have multiplied the evidence, and made the points more clear, by passages from other authors. But I have refrained from further quotations, lest I should seem to class as Modernists writers who have accepted the recent Encyclical. If among their earlier writings there are passages which bear trace of these tendencies, and which on that account have been condemned, this would not justify citation of what their authors themselves have disavowed.

A portion of this study appeared in the *Études* (November 20, 1907); one or two pages and some few quotations have been taken from the theological chronicle in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*.

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The Encyclical and Modernist Theology

Introduction

AMONG papal encyclicals few are of such far-reaching importance as the Encyclical *Pascendi;* at the same time few are so difficult to understand. The number of commentaries it has called forth on all sides during the last few months is proof of the interest it has aroused; and the variety of interpretations it has already received is sufficient witness to its difficulty. If, then, I endeavour, after so many others, to throw some little light upon the matter, its all-importance, combined with its obscurity, must be my excuse.

In these few pages will be found no personal controversy; they contain no more than a discussion of ideas. Even with this

limitation the task is unpleasant enough; still, it is some consolation that no love of controversy has prompted the undertaking. The questions in dispute affect the very life of religion; while the feeling that an ill-directed blow may wound some sensitive nature to the quick makes one hesitate the more to venture on any discussion of them. Nevertheless; discuss them one must. The problems in question have been proposed on many sides in a way that cannot be ignored; the Pope has lately solved them; it is for us to understand, and to help others to understand, both the matter in dispute and the motives of the decree.

This duty is the more imperative, as nothing but the extreme gravity of the case can account for the exceeding gravity of the sentence. The Pope declares that the errors he condemns are the compendium of all heresies; that they lead to pantheism and atheism; and against them he decrees repressive and preservative measures, rigorous in the extreme. If, then, these doctrines were not in matter of fact destructive of the

faith, this would be nothing less than an act of injustice and an abuse of power.

Furthermore, it is important to make clear an ambiguity which Modernists find it to their purpose to create. In the manifesto published by them in Italy [1] they put themselves forward as the champions of science, independent of every philosophical system, led to the conclusions they defend by mere anxiety for scientific truth. According to them (p. 21), Modernism is the only method of criticism. Then, in the exposition of their tenets they are careful to place in the first rank critical opinions which many Catholics hold as well; for example, that which concerns the priority of St. Mark, and that which regards the *logia* as the common origin of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

So unfair an interpretation of the pontifical document as this implies cannot be tolerated. Men on the one side or the other,

[1] *Il programma dei modernisti. Risposta all'enciclica di Pio X. "Pascendi dominici gregis."* Roma, Società internazionale scientifico-religiosa editrice, 1908, 237 pp. in 8vo.

be they enemies or friends, must not be led to believe that all sincere historical research and exegesis are henceforth condemned by the Pope. To destroy this false understanding one course only is open : that is, to show what in matter of fact are the doctrines which have been condemned.

But how are these doctrines to be known? Modernists have written no manual of theology for their use, in which one might hope to find a true and authentic exposition of their religious ideas. The Encyclical is, perhaps, the first attempt at a synthesis of their teaching;[1] the strength with which it has been put together, as well as the exactness and extent of information that it implies, cannot but strike every impartial observer. Nevertheless, to estimate its truth, it is clear that we cannot, without begging

[1] Some months ago, when reviewing Mr. Campbell's *New Theology* in the *Hibbert Journal* (July, 1907, p. 921), Mr. Rashdall remarked on the difficulty of finding any book which explained to the uninitiated, in any synthetic and intelligible form, the bearing of the liberal theology. Mr. Campbell's book does no more than indicate extreme positions.

the whole question, take it as our first source of knowledge; we must needs begin from the works of the Modernists themselves. Thus the difficulty reappears. In their books and their articles an abundance of statements and principles are to be found on exegesis, philosophy, history; but has anyone the right to organize them into a system? The exegete makes a point of declaring his independence of all philosophical theory; the philosopher pleads his incompetence in all that concerns exegesis. Still one fact must be apparent to the most casual observer. It is that these philosophers and exegetes alike are conscious of possessing ideas in common, and understand one another by the merest hint. For example the only philosopher whom M. Loisy quotes in *L'Évangile et l'Église* is Mr. Edward Caird; the same whom we find later lending his support to *Il Rinnovamento*. Or again, when Father Tyrrell finds occasion to examine the origins of Christian revelation, he relies for his evidence on M. Wernle.

Another fact is still more significant.

Among the different branches of Protestantism it is well known that there has arisen during the last century an extreme left or so-called Liberal party, whose tendencies and methods are clear, intelligible to all, and relatively easy to dissect. Now these Liberal Protestants recognize in the Modernist movement a manifestation of the spirit which animates themselves. Whatever may be the surface differences, they are conscious that the same strong current which carries them along, carries along with them the Liberal philosophers and exegetes of the Roman Communion. "In all the Churches," wrote Mr. Campbell recently, "those who believe in the religion of the Spirit should recognize one another as brothers." [1]

The same is the impression among Catholic Modernists. "A great spiritual crisis," write their Italian representatives, "which did not begin to-day, but has to-day reached its culminating intensity, troubles all the religious bodies of Europe—Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism. For the most part it is due to

[1] *New Theology* (London, 1907), p. 13.

the new orientation of the public mind, which is at variance with the traditional expressions of the religious spirit; it is due to the popularized results of science, which diffuse an instinctive distrust of those metaphysical and historical titles on which the dogmatic teaching of the Churches rests its claims." [1]

It is felt on both sides that agreement on the fundamental point of the criticism of dogma overrules all other disagreements. Contradictions which have hitherto determined the opposition between one Church and another in the symbols of their faith now become no more than accidental differences; [2] and, among Protestants, the dawn

[1] *Il programma*, p. 130; English translation, p. 159.

[2] "Not only will the Churches still retain all their functions as guardians of prophetic or revealed truth, nd of a flexible doctrinal unity analogous to the unity of rites and observances, but, liberated from all the entanglements of an indefensible claim to scientific accuracy—a claim as obsolete as that to temporal or coercive jurisdiction—they will recover their sorely compromised dignity and credit. Moreover their doctrinal divisions, the bitterest fruit of the dogmatic fallacy, will cease to be regarded as differences of

of the day is hailed "when the Liberal Catholic movement will have worked itself consistently through into the Free Catholic movement, in which Protestantism and Romanism, carried up into a new religious and undogmatic unity, will be there transcended or reconciled." [1]

We may, then, claim to be justified in making use of what knowledge we possess of "Liberal" Christianity in interpreting the Modernist theology. At the same time we

aith when the prophetic nature of dogmatic truth is more intelligently recognized" (G. Tyrrell, "The Rights and Limits of Theology," *Quarterly Review*, October, 1905, p. 491). In reproducing this article in *Scylla and Charybdis*, Fr. Tyrrell has corrected "doctrinal divisions" to "merely theological divisions" (p. 241). The expression is changed, the sense remains the same, when we remember the meaning which the author gives to the word "theological."

[1] J. Lloyd Thomas, "The Free Catholic Ideal" (*Hibbert Journal*, July, 1907, p. 801). Cf. J. Bruce Wallace, "An Attempt to Realize Mr. Campbell's Proposal" (ibid., pp. 903-05). Cf. also, in the same sense, an article by Mr. Ménégoz on Fogazzaro's "Il Santo" (*Revue chrétienne*, January 1, 1907, pp. 1 sqq.). Some extracts are cited by M. Dudon (*Etudes*, October 5, 1907, pp. 150–151).

have no intention of attributing to Modernists every Liberal proposition, nor even of declaring Modernists themselves to be of the same mind one with another. Modernism, like Liberalism, is a method rather than a doctrine. Its range may be confined or expanded more or less. We take it here in its most fundamental form.[1]

This is what the Encyclical has had most directly in view; in it, besides, the drift of the whole movement can be most easily recognized. I shall be careful to impute to no single person any proposition but that which he has himself enunciated; the reader is requested not to extend the imputation to others. But the exposition of the question is much facilitated by the Italian manifesto; in it the greater part of the Modernist propositions are formulated with all the clearness that could be desired.

[1] I mean, in the most fundamental form which has hitherto found favour among Catholics. I shall say nothing of the pure pantheism such as is to be found, for example, in the *New Theology* of Mr. Campbell. To that, so far as I know, no Catholic has hitherto subscribed.

CHAPTER I

The Principles of Modernism

To understand the bearing of the movement it will be necessary to say something of its origin. The Italian Modernists above quoted accurately specify its two principal causes; they are, the attitude of the religious consciousness, and philosophical and scientific criticism.

In a conference on *The Catholic Faith*,[1] delivered and published under the patronage of the Krausgesellschaft, M. K. Gebert keeps repeating that faith resting upon authority is the characteristic of man in the Middle Ages, but is utterly repugnant to men of modern times. The remark is true; and in this

[1] *Katholischer Glaube und die Entwicklung des Geisteslebens.* Oeffentlicher Vortrag gehalten in der Krausgesellschaft in München am 10 januar, 1905, von Dr. Karl Gebert, München, 1905. Selbstverlag der Krausgesellschaft.

regard at least Modernists are thorough-going men of their time. They claim entire independence of conscience. They desire to remain children of the Church, but emancipated children.

"Before her," wrote Fr. Tyrrell recently, "the Church of Rome will find neither heresy nor schism, but a number of men, bowing under excommunication, firmly believing in her just rights, but determined to resist her extravagant pretensions—assisting at her Masses, reciting her breviary, observing her abstinences, obeying her laws, and, so far as they are allowed, sharing in her life. And these excommunicated men, in many cases, will of necessity be not only the most intelligent and educated, but also the most ardently sincere, the most disinterested of her children, the most assuredly possessed of the spirit of religion and of the Gospel. But—a thing which will cause serious and persistent unrest in the Church—they will, nevertheless, speak out freely and fearlessly, in the interests of the Church herself; they will demand and will exercise

the rights of voice and pen, monopolized to-day by a band of ecclesiastical reactionaries.[1] . . . The existence and continual increase of this section of protesting Catholics (whether excommunicated or ready to become proselytes) is a problem of the near future to which the Church of Rome, represented at least by her present rulers, must be resigned until she shall have definitely learnt that the day for juridicial and physical coercion is gone for ever; until she shall have finally realized that the intellect can only be controlled in proportion as its laws and rights are respected; until she shall have understood that love and obedience must be free, or not exist at all; until she shall have recognized that spiritual victories are to be gained by spiritual arms, not by the sword of juridical and physical coercion." [2]

[1] Fr. Tyrrell here cites the authority of St. Augustine; the same passage is quoted by the anonymous authors of the *Programma* (p. 141); I shall discuss it later in an appendix.

[2] "L'excommunication salutaire" (*Grande Revue*, October 10, 1907, pp. 670–72). The editor of the Review tells us in a note at the beginning of the article (p. 661) that these pages were written by Fr. Tyrrell—then Fr. Tyrrell, S.J.—on May 18, 1904.

The Italians are less vehement, but not less decided: "Ecclesiastical authority," they write, "brusquely arrests our progress and condemns our labours. Well, we feel it is our duty to offer a loyal resistance, and at any cost to defend that Catholic tradition, whereof the Church is guardian, in a way which for the moment may merit the condemnation of authority, but which, we are sure, will in the end prevail to the Church's advantage."[1]

Before asserting this autonomy for religion it had already been claimed for science; and, however illegitimate the claim, this latter could still be made more specious, and could be supported by more plausible authority. For centuries, they said, men had aimed at co-ordinating, or rather sub-

[1] *Il programma*, p. 132 (English translation, p. 162). Cf. ibid. p. 11: "Through a series of causes, into which we need not here enter, Catholics seem to have lost every elementary sense of responsibility and personal dignity. Instead of being met with a service of reasonable and therefore discerning obedience, the acts of their supreme rulers are received with the unconscious acquiescence of irresponsible beings" (English translation, p. 9).

ordinating, scientific truths to what were called truths of revelation. This had resulted in nothing but forced constraint, hampering the resourcefulness of science while it compromized the honour of the faith.[1] For the future this aim was repudiated; the believer had not the right to impose this subjection, nor had the scholar the right to accept it. Loyal, sincere, scientific work demanded full independence and liberty, without dogmatic prejudice.

"The first condition for scientific work," wrote M. Loisy, "is liberty. The first duty of the scholar, whether Catholic or not, is sincerity. The author of *L'Évangile et l'Église* had handled the beginnings of Christianity in virtue of his rights as an historian, and on his own responsibility. He confesses that within his limited range of knowledge he does not understand what

[1] Mr. A. White's book (*A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, London, 1896) is no more than an uncritical compilation; still, it has made a great impression on some of its readers, particularly on Fr. Tyrrell (*Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 200).

is meant by science 'with the approbation of superiors.'" [1]

Along with the exterior control of ecclesiastical authority, the control also of faith over science has been repudiated. Men started by declaring that, on its own avowal, faith would never be injured by the truth ; what then was there to fear? "As St. Thomas says (C. G. i. 7), faith and reason cannot be in conflict. We should, therefore, courageously apply our criticism to the study of religion, confident that whatever is destroyed by the process can in no way belong to the substance of our religious faith."[2]

This argument, in spite of the self-satisfaction with which it is urged,[3] is a

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. x.

[2] *Il programma*, p. 24 ; Eng. transl., p. 27.

[3] "Is it not a received theological axiom that faith and science, as two rays from the same divine light, cannot contradict one another? This surely does not mean that faith is in harmony merely with a science expurgated *ad usum Delphini*. That would be an insult to the divine veracity" (*Il programma*, p. 108 ; Eng. transl., p. 131).

manifest fallacy, too manifest, one suspects, to deceive even its authors. Whatever esteem a man may have for science, he cannot consider it to be infallible. We know too well that the best intentions and even the best of methods cannot always guarantee us against error; it follows that conflicts between the truths of revelation and the conclusions of science are possible.

Recourse is next had to an argument which reaches yet farther than the first, and aims at destroying the very possibility of conflict. Faith is regarded as independent of all intellectual concepts; hence faith and science occupy absolutely distinct planes. "Seeing that religion," says M. Gebert, "is a form of the relations between feeling and will, and consequently belongs to the *practical* activity of the conscience, it can in no way be affected by the results of research made by *free science*; for these are the products of *theoretic* activity, whatever they may be besides."[1]

"Modernists," says the Italian manifesto,

[1] *Katholischer Glaube*, p. 78.

"in full agreement with contemporary psychology, distinguish sharply between science and faith. The spiritual sources from which they proceed seem to us quite distinct and independent. This, for us, is a fundamental acquisition. The pretence that we subjugate faith to science is simply senseless." [1] And a little later: "We have grown to a conviction that even the most revolutionary pronouncements of science can in no wise upset the affirmation of religious faith, since the spiritual processes from which faith and science result are independent of one another and the laws of their development wholly different." [2]

These are serious principles, for they imply adherence to an entire philosophy of religion, and extend its influence to all future research. The authors of the manifesto profess at the outset their complete independence of all metaphysical theories; they claim to have undertaken and pursued their scientific researches un-

[1] *Il programma*, p. 121; Eng. transl., p. 147.
[2] Ibid., p. 132; Eng. transl., p. 161.

biassed by any *a priori* conceptions; the philosophy of religion to which they adhere has been the result of their labours, not the equipment with which they have begun. For all that, nothing is more evident than that their method of work is entirely governed by philosophical postulates.

This does but confirm what is evident from other indications; that is, that philosophic criticism has told with greater effect on the Modernist movement than the criticism in the direction of either exegesis or history; and that it is the philosophy of religion which has given to exegetes and historians the fundamental principles upon which they have worked.

Auguste Sabatier, late dean of the Faculty of Protestant theology in Paris, who has done more than any other French writer to propagate and win approval for these principles in both Catholic and Protestant circles, writes as follows in his *Esquisse*: "Thinking men may to-day be divided into two classes: those who go

back beyond Kant, and those who have received, as it were, their philosophic initiation and baptism from his *Critique*." [1]

Catholic Modernists do not repudiate this initiation ; indeed, they openly avow it.[2] But by doing so, on their own confession, the old foundations of the faith are overturned. "The alleged bases of faith have proved themselves rotten beyond cure." [3] M. Ménégoz, professor in the Faculty of Protestant theology in Paris, has told us of the religious crisis through which he passed when "Kant succeeded in demolishing his four sound proofs of the existence of God, and in thus depriving him of all religious certitude." [4] The same is the experience of Catholics: "We must recognize, first of all, that the arguments for the existence of God, drawn by scholastic metaphysic from change and movement, from the finite and contingent nature of

[1] *Esquisse*, p. 359.

[2] Gebert, *Katholischer Glaube*, pp. 28 sqq.

[3] *Il programma*, p. 11 ; Eng. transl., p. 8.

[4] *Le fidéisme et la notion de la foi* (*Revue de Théol. et des quest. relig.*, July, 1905), p. 48.

things, from the degrees of perfection, and from the design and purpose of the world, have lost all value nowadays. The conceptions in which these arguments rest have now, owing to the post-Kantian criticism both of abstract and empirical sciences and of philosophical language, lost that character of absoluteness which they possessed for the mediæval Aristotelians." [1]

In the crisis everything is jeopardized. The whole plane and line of thought are threatened. The old intellectual system goes by the board; for the Modernist it has become unthinkable, and whoever continues to abide by it cuts himself off from all contemporary thought. Henceforth he despairs of ever attaining the absolute by any intellectual process; but he believes it may be reached by action and by life. "Since our life," say the Italian Modernists, "is—for each one of us—something absolute, nay, the only absolute of our direct experience, all that proceeds from it and returns to it, all that feeds it and expands it more fruitfully,

[1] *Il programma*, p. 98; Eng. transl., p. 118.

has, in like manner, the value of something absolute."[1]

The application of this principle in the Modernist theology will appear later on; it is enough here to indicate the general attitude of the Modernist mind.[2]

Their exegesis and their history have alike been conducted in subordination to these principles. For example, under the influence of these preconceived ideas they

[1] *Il programma*, p. 112; Eng. transl., p. 135.

[2] At the same time it is well to notice at once how precarious the subjectivism of Kant renders all adherence to a religion of authority. See, for example, the very just strictures upon this subject of O. Pfleiderer, who recognizes in the *Critique* of Kant the very root principle of Protestantism. "One can understand," he says, "[mistrust of Kant] in a Church which for fifteen centuries has rested upon sacerdotal authority. But the Protestant Church, which has shaken off the yoke of this authority, which has vindicated the rights of the individual conscience, which has accepted faith as its only guide, that is, the gift of the heart to the will of God, ought not this Church to recognize in the religion of conscience, such as Kant has conceived it, the very spirit of its own spirit?" (*Geschichte der Religionsphilosophie*, p. vi.).

have imagined the origin of Christianity "a sort of religion originally formless and undogmatic."[1] Still more effectual in shaping their conclusions has been the assumption, as a first principle, of the mutual independence of science and faith. Their exegesis, as we have seen, has drawn its inspiration from their philosophic theories; but by an inevitable reaction it has in its turn extended scope and bearing of the latter.

The ravages which a science so emancipated was bound to effect could be easily foreseen. Even had it remained impartial it was liable to advance in a wrong direction, and shake the very foundations of Christianity. But, as a matter of fact, such neutrality was a name and no more. As always happens in such cases, resentment at subjection provoked a reaction. Every traditional principle was held to be suspect; no bold venture but was thought probable; and Christian writings, hitherto the most venerated, were treated with a

[1] *Il programma*, p. 79; cf. p. 137; Eng. transl., p. 94.

mistrust and suspicion which profane texts never received.[1]

Works inspired with these prejudices, and elaborated in detail according to this method, were multiplied in every quarter, above all in the Protestant Universities of Germany. At first the uninitiated public paid little attention to these dissertations and theories, but in the end the united efforts of all these workers, some of whom were men of exceptional erudition, piled up a mass of scientific theories right in the way of traditional belief. The meaning of the most fundamental dogmas then came into question, and to the one and the same problem science and faith seemed to give contradictory solutions. Thus it was, for example, in regard to the virgin Conception of Christ, His Resurrection, His pre-existence, His Divine nature. A choice, insistent and harsh, arose there upon between science and faith; what for

[1] On this subject may well be read the protest raised some years ago by Frederic Blass in the name of philology against the Liberal theology and its methods of criticism (*Acta Apostolorum*, Editio philologica, Göttingen, 1895, p. 30.

many souls were the agonies of that struggle God alone knows. At this juncture the philosophy of religion which has been outlined above was produced as the liberating solution. Without conscious self-deceit a man could not give the lie to science; without destroying his very life he could not deny his faith. To escape from the dilemma it was enough to realize that after all the faith was not chained to a fixed form of creed, and that if a scholar were compelled to surrender to criticism all the beliefs of his childhood, he might all the same maintain the integrity of his faith.[1]

[1] "This conviction (that we are saved by faith, independently of our beliefs) frees our conscience in regard to certain scientific, historical, and philosophical assumptions which orthodoxy would set before us as constituent parts of the Christian faith. And while setting us at liberty in respect to those points which belong to the secular order, it strengthens us in our religious faith and gives us a peace and a joy in strong contrast with that agonizing trouble produced by doubt in a conscience under the sway of the principles of orthodoxy. When I make these assertions I speak from experience, for I have passed through this agony and I know this joy. I would share my happi-

This attitude of mind has shown itself, first and foremost, within the Protestant Churches. For some time past it has struck all attentive observers, even those who are least anxious about the interests of orthodoxy.[1] But it would take too long to draw out here the history of Liberal Protestantism ; besides, many of its different schools have been elsewhere admirably described.[2]

ness with all those who, as I have been before this, are tormented with these doubts. . . ." (E. Ménégoz, *Une triple distinction théologique*, p. 22, Paris, 1907).

[1] Goyau, *L'Irreligion de l'avenir*, pp. xv. 131–56.

[2] For Germany, M. Goyau's book, *L'Allemagne religieuse, le Protestantisme* (Paris, 1898), gives abundant and trustworthy evidence. This might be supplemented by two recent dissertations by Protestant theologians, the second of which in particular is of unusual interest—A. Arnal, *La Personne du Christ et le rationalisme allemand contemporain* (Paris, 1904) ; M. Goguel, *Wilhelm Herrmann et le problème religieux actuel* (Paris, 1905). The history of French Liberal Protestantism has been summarized by M. A. Bertrand, who himself is a member of that school (*La pensée religieuse au sein du protestantisme libéral. Ses déficits actuels, son orientation prochaine*, Paris, 1903) ; its doctrines have been drawn out by

But even in the fold of the Catholic Church has not Liberal Christianity made recruits? It would have been a miracle, indeed, had all access been closed to it. Protestants had, it must be honestly allowed, advanced far beyond us in many respects during the course of the last century. For the establishment and interpretation of the Scripture text, for the theology of the Old and New Testament, for the history of Christian origins and the further develop-

M. J. Réville (*Le Protestantisme libéral, ses origines, sa nature, sa mission*, Paris, 1903). On the same subject may be found an interesting discussion in *Libre pensée et Protestantisme libéral* (Paris, 1903), by F. Buisson and Ch. Wagner. *Symbolofidéisme*, now closely allied to Liberalism, has been explained and defended particularly by A. Sabatier (*Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion d'après la psychologie et l'histoire*, and *Les Religions d'autorité et la Religion de l'esprit*), and E. Ménégoz (*Publications diverses sur le fidéisme et son application à l'enseignement chrétien traditionnel* (Paris, 1900). Among Protestant authors who have combated it may be cited H. Bois (*De la connaissance religieuse. Essai critique sur les récentes discussions.* Paris, 1894) et E. Doumergue (*Les Étapes du fidéisme*, Paris, *s.d.*).

ment of dogma, no one could, no one can even yet, without presumption and without loss, disregard their labours. But it was difficult to make use of these without coming under their influence, without allowing oneself to be drawn by the prestige of undisputed knowledge to favour principles contrary to faith. Some minds were more susceptible to the attraction of the philosophy of religion, such, for instance, as is elaborated in the works of A. Sabatier. The idealistic conceptions to which they inclined had predisposed them to feel this influence, and they fancied they could distinguish, beyond the narrow horizon of dogmatic formulas, freed from the theological trappings that weighed them down, a faith that should be henceforward unfettered and serene.

It is not for us to condemn those whom this mirage has led astray. We are not their judge ; what is more, their writings bear trace of too much suffering for us to be able to read them without commiseration. We confine ourselves simply to a description of their

attitude, and to noticing the impression they have produced even outside the Church. The most advanced Liberals have recognized their teaching, and have welcomed with enthusiasm these new brothers in arms, on whose support they had not dared to reckon. One of the most advanced among English Liberals, the apostle of the New Theology, Mr. Campbell, recently wrote, speaking of the movement which he strains every effort to promote: "There is no Church where this movement is more marked at present than in the venerable Church of Rome herself, the mother-Church of Western Christendom. The very same movement which in a somewhat different form is represented in this country by the New Theology is proceeding in Italy and elsewhere under Roman Catholic influences and under another name."[1] Another writer found occasion to remark that the movement was deeper and more powerful than was

[1] R. J. Campbell, "The Aim of the New Theology Movement" (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1907, p. 489).

appreciated by those who judged of it only from its most obvious manifestations—that is, from the works of such as Loisy, Fogazzaro, and Tyrrell. "Roman Catholics," he says, "are well trained and disciplined. . . . The Liberals among them have, we may suppose, some of the self-restraint, the prudence, the diplomacy, and even the subtlety with which we credit (or discredit) their Church as a whole. That they still find it discreet to write pseudonymously tells its own tale. The magnitude and the power of the new movement cannot, therefore, be estimated by what appears on the surface. The current of its influence runs deep and still." [1]

Along with this premature confidence—ill-supported as it is by inaccurate observation and extremely exaggerated judgements—there has not infrequently appeared a certain surprise, and even scandal, that Catholics should find it possible to reconcile so radical a criticism of Christian dogmas

[1] J. Lloyd Thomas, "The Free Catholic Ideal" (*Hibbert Journal*, July, 1907, p. 800).

with the submission they professed to their Church.[1] No one dreams of being astonished that an Anglican canon, or a professor of theology in a German Protestant University, should make it his aim to ruin traditional beliefs: but the same licence cannot be accorded to a Roman Catholic priest. This conviction rendered implicit testimony to the dogmatic strength of the Roman Church; and the Encyclical on which we are here commenting has come to prove to every one that they had not misjudged that strength.

In the midst of this upheaval, which threatens to shake Christianity itself, one

[1] Mr. Campbell, after citing a long passage from an article in the *Nuovo Mondo* signed by M. T. Scotti, adds: "This passage might have been written by Auguste Sabatier himself, for it breathes the very essence of the religion of the Spirit. . . . How the author reconciles such a statement with the duty of obedience to ecclesiastical authority is not easy for an outsider to understand" (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1907, p. 400). Cf. on M. Loisy, Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 28 (Oxford, 1905): Mason, in *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 455 (London, 1905).

only voice has been able to command both a hearing and respect; that voice is the voice of the Pope. Already more than once he had uttered a warning; but his last pronouncement is so weighty and so solemn that all else may be forgotten.

To many Christians it has revealed a danger they never even suspected; and the account of the Modernist doctrines which it has given has been for them a lesson more eloquent than all censures. It was no accusation, much less a travesty; a Modernist well qualified to judge has written: "The picture he draws of Modernism is so seductive to an educated mind, and the counterpart he suggests so repellent, as to make the Encyclical rather 'dangerous' reading for the children of this world."[1]

[1] G. Tyrrell, in the *Times* of Sept. 30th, 1907. M. Aulard pronounced the same judgement in an article, otherwise by no means favourable, which he has spread very liberally amongst several provincial journals: "The exposition of Modernism," he says, "is detailed, interesting, altogether curious. . . . It is noteworthy, indeed a novelty, that the Encyclical explains Modernism, not in caricature, but with a

I do not know what may be the impression of the "children of this world," but that of the children of the Church is unmistakable: with all the vigour of their faith they reject these poisonous doctrines.

To strengthen this impression and to make it the more apparent, we propose to set in opposition, in a few broad outlines, the two contradictory conceptions of Christianity presented by the Catholic and the Modernist. But to touch on all the questions to which they offer opposite answers would be here impossible; we prefer to confine ourselves exclusively to the

certain detachment and with almost all its charm. The ideas of those who seek to adapt Catholicism to the present conditions of thought and to the present needs of society, are seen there in all their fulness and consistency. . . . All the innovating tendencies of Catholics in matters of faith, exegesis, or in politico-social questions are neatly summarized, sometimes expanded, in this elaborate Encyclical. All are condemned as absurd, after having been described with all their fascination, without any attempt at disguising the sentence under the appearance of a refutation" (*Progrès de Saône-et-Loire*, September 27, 1907).

one fundamental problem—the faith, considered in its origin, revelation; in its expression, dogma; and in its rule, the authority of conscience and the authority of the Church.

CHAPTER II

The Theology of Modernism

If a Catholic is asked, "What do you believe, and why?" he replies in the words of his act of faith: "I believe whatever God has revealed, and because He has revealed it." This is an answer common to all believers; but if it is urged, "What do you understand by 'Whatever God has revealed'?", then the Modernist no longer gives the same answer as the Catholic.

When we say that God has made a revelation we mean that God has spoken to man to make known to him some truth, and that man has recognized His voice.[1]

[1] By this we do not intend to reduce revelation to a phenomenon perceptible by the senses; it is by the soul and within the soul that the voice of God is heard. This interior voice is sometimes accompanied with exterior signs, but the essence of revelation consists in psychological enlightenment, and not in bodily sight or hearing. This is the traditional teaching of the Church; cf. St. Thomas (II–II. clxiii. 2),

The prophetical books enable us to understand by very clear examples what is the meaning of Divine revelation. When the prophets communicated to the Jews the designs of God, they were conscious to

who cites St. Augustine. Our adversaries often misunderstand this point and, in consequence, contend with shadows; for instance, Mr. J. M. Wilson ("Revelation and Modern Knowledge," in *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 228, n., London, 1905) thus opposes the traditional idea, which he calls objective, to his own, which he terms subjective:

"By the word 'objective,' as applied to revelation, I mean any communication of truth that comes to a mind in and through the phenomenal world. By the word 'subjective,' applied to revelation, I mean communication of truth in and through the world of personality."

Mr. Sanday has very properly protested against this misunderstanding (*Journ. Theol. Studies*, vii. 174, 1906).

"Who really thinks, or has ever really thought, of the prophetic inspiration—the type of all inspiration—as 'phenomenal'? What is called the subjective mode of revelation is no modern discovery, but goes back almost as far as the correlated ideas of inspiration and revelation of all. 'No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21)." What process could be imagined more entirely subjective?

themselves of being no more than His heralds: "Thus saith the Lord," was their formula. At times, when discouraged and alarmed by persecution, they endeavoured to stifle the voice of God within them. "I am speaking now this long time," says Jeremias (xx. 8), "crying out against iniquity, and I often proclaim devastation: and the word of the Lord is made a reproach to me, and a derision all the day. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name: and there came in my heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was wearied, not being able to bear it." But after this cry of pain the prophet rouses himself, conscious of the force of God with him: "But the Lord is with me as a strong warrior: therefore they that persecute me shall fall."

Passages like these are found in all the prophets. We feel that an imperious power drives them on against their own interests, the deepest rooted national instincts, the popular feeling stirred up around them and condemning them; and this power is no blind,

undetermined impulse, but a concept that transcends all their own individual views, bearing, it is true, in every case the stamp of their character and their surroundings, but at the same time being evolved with a unity and a continuity which prove it to be divine.

For Modernists revelation has quite another meaning. In their view every man receives it immediately within his soul. It is not precisely the divine manifestation of a truth; it is an emotion, an impulse of the religious sentiment which, at times, so to speak, bubbles up from the depths of subconscious thought, and in which the believer recognizes the touch of God.

This emotion arouses, by a spontaneous reaction, an imaginative or intellectual representation which, in turn, sustains and fosters it. The image or concept thus formed is not immediately revealed by God; it will, in consequence, possess no sovereign or infallible significance. No doubt it is aroused by the stirring and awakening of God within the soul; still it owes its particular form to the mental

habits of the individual. So with a man asleep, a dream may be occasioned by any exterior cause whatever, but its form and character entirely depend upon the images which occupy the brain.

The nature of the religious emotions experienced by the prophets, and the way they are led to take for a divine revelation what is only a spontaneous act of their own soul, is explained by Fr. Tyrrell in the following terms :

"There is little doubt that an intense feeling, passion, or emotion will in some instances incorporate itself in congenial imaginations and conceptions ; that from the storehouse of the memory it will, as it rushes onwards, snatch to itself by a sort of magnetism such garments as may best set it forth on the stage of thought. In respect to such conceptions and visions the recipient is almost as passive and determined as he is in regard to the spiritual emotions so embodied. Hence these presentments of the supernatural world seem to be quite specially inspired, to possess a higher authority and to come less indirectly from God

than those that are deliberately sought out in explanation of the life of religion. Yet in fact their only superiority is that they may indicate a stronger, purer, deeper impulse of the Divine spirit; not that they are any more directly representative of those invisible realities known to us merely by the blind gropings of love. All revelation, truly such, is in some measure or other an expression of the Divine mind in man, of the spirit of God; but it is not necessarily a Divine expression of that spirit; for the expression is but the reaction, spontaneous or reflex, of the human mind to God's touch felt within the heart, and this reaction in characterized wholly by the ideas, forms, and images wherewith the mind is stocked in each particular case.[1]

This explanation becomes more clear if we compare the principal features of the Catholic and the Modernist ideas of revelation. For the Catholic the truths which

[1] "Rights and Limits of Theology" (*Quarterly Review*, October, 1905); *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 208.

God reveals to us are, in part at least, outside our natural horizon; if He had not revealed them to us out of His gratuitous bounty we could never have come to know them. For the Modernist, on the other hand, all religious truths are implicitly contained in the conscience of man: "Could he read the needs of his own spirit and conscience, he would need no teacher. But it is only by groping, by trying this or that suggestion of reason or tradition, that he finds out what he really wants." [1]

It follows that, for the Catholic, revelation is essentially the communication of a truth; for the Modernist it is essentially the uplifting or the awakening of the religious sense. Hence the antitheses by which they are fond of setting the two doctrines in contradistinction one to the other: "Revelation belongs

[1] *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 277: "Because man *is* part and parcel of the spiritual world and of the supernatural order; because in God he lives and moves and has his being, the truth of religion is in him implicitly, as surely as the truth of the whole physical universe is involved in every part of it." (Then follows the passage above quoted.)

rather to the category of impressions than to that of expression";[1] "Revelation is not statement, but experience";[2] and in the same sense a Protestant, Mr. Wilson, writes: "Revelation is education, not instruction."[3]

In short, for the Catholic, in revelation God communicates a truth to man; for the Modernist, man speaks to himself: "There it is *always* and *necessarily* we ourselves who speak to ourselves: who (aided, no doubt, by the immanent God) work out truth for ourselves."[4]

Out of these two fundamentally opposite ideas of revelation held by Catholics and Modernists flow of necessity two contradictory estimates of its truth-value.

For the Catholic this truth is absolute, seeing that it comes from God; what is more, it does not consist of the adaptation of our belief to our religious needs, but of its conformity with the Divine truth which is

[1] *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 280.

[2] Ibid., p. 285.

[3] *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 237.

[4] *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 281. The italics are by the author.

its object. "The faith," wrote St. Irenæus long ago, "rests on things which have a real existence, and so we believe in a thing that is, and in the manner that it is; and because we believe in a thing that is, in the manner that it is, our certainty is complete." [1]

The Modernist cannot possess this assurance. The divine action is not confined to the communication of a truth, but to the propagation of a life. The intellectual concept, or the dogma, is the effect of a purely human influence; it is not, then, directly guaranteed by God, and has not further claim upon our reverence than its connection with the religious emotion to which it owes its being.[2]

[1] *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* (Leipzig, 1907, iii. 3).

[2] "In what sense," writes Fr. Tyrrell, "are religious revelations divinely authorized? What sort of truth is guaranteed to them by the 'seal of the spirit'? In accordance with what has been already said we must answer—a truth which is directly practical, preferential, approximative, and only indirectly speculative. What is immediately approved, as it were experimentally, is a way of living, feeling, and acting with reference to the other

To sum up, we have here an inversion of that fundamental relation which is the basis of the truth of faith. Revelation for the Catholic is a supernatural communication which provides faith with its object; and faith in its turn is the rule of personal devotion. For the Modernist, revelation is a feeling which stirs up devotion, and devotion in its turn engenders faith.[1]

world. The explanatory and justificatory conceptions subsequently sought out by [or even forced spontaneously from] the mind as postulated by the 'way of life,' have no direct divine approval; [they are at best a purely natural reaction of man's mind to a supernatural stimulation of his heart]. Again, the divine approval of the way and the life (and therefore indirectly of the explanatory truth) is mostly preferential, it is a favouring of one alternative, not as ideal and finally perfect, but as an approximation to the ideal, as a 'move in the right direction,'" "The Rights and Limits of Theology" (*Quarterly Review*, October, 1905, p. 467). In reproducing his article in *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 210, the author has omitted the words here enclosed in square brackets.

[1] This is precisely what, in other words, Sabatier teaches (*Esquisse*, p. 268): "The religious phenomenon has, then, but two constituent parts: objective revelation as its cause, and subjective devotion as its

In the first case the truth of faith is absolute, arising from its conformity with its object; in the second it is relative, arising from its relation to the religious sense. This is but an application of the philosophic principle above quoted (p. 30): "Since our own life is—for each one of us—something absolute, nay, the only absolute of our direct experience, all that proceeds from it and returns to it, all that feeds it and expands it more fruitfully, has, in like manner, the value of something absolute." [1]

It is now an easy matter to grasp the effect which these various principles must have on the idea of Christian revelation, its transmission, and the adherence which we owe to it.

The Catholic believes that all the truths of faith which he possesses come to him from Christ and the apostles. God, before the

effect. Thus there are three elements which invariably follow one another in the same order: the interior revelation from God, which produces in man subjective devotion, which in turn gives rise to the forms of religion as we find them."

[1] *Il programma*, p. 112; English translation, p. 135.

coming of our Lord, had spoken many times to men, particularly through the prophets. But this supreme revelation was given to us through His Son. Since then, it is true, heaven has not been closed; but the words of God which find an echo deep down in our hearts, however precious and dear they may be to ourselves, do not reveal to us new mysteries, and have not for us the infallible certainty of public and authorized revelation, which is the patrimony of every Christian, and is transmitted to us by the Church.

In saying this, we do not make the mistake of ascribing to the first beginnings of the Christian faith those doctrinal formulas which the Church has since gradually elaborated. We know that the religious knowledge which proceeds immediately from revelation has not the form of a theology. In the first Christian documents we do not discover that reflex effort of thought which co-ordinates axioms and organizes them into a system; on the contrary, they contain but the natural and

spontaneous expression of a creed, the intellectual acceptance of a reality that is revealed.

This original adherence to the divine reality, this wholly concrete and living perception, is the one and only source from which all dogmas have been derived. For a long time, it is true, many of them remained latent in the abundance of this first revelation, which has never ceased to provide fresh food for the thought and life of the Church. Little by little, when research has become more keen and devotion more lively, or often under stress of contradiction, the Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, has realized in fuller detail the truths which she carried within her bosom. These infallible utterances have never been recast; still less has any one ever been able to correct the sense which had once been given to them by the Church.[1]

In this vital progress there has been no ncrease of revelation. It is only that the

[1] Hinc sacrorum quoque dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit Sancta

Church has gradually acquired a more conscious grasp of its content and has given it a more clear-cut definition.[1]

On these points Modernists find it impossible to come to an agreement with us. To them Christian revelation at the outset, like every other, was an impulse rather than a light. The authors of the *Programma* thus indicate the conclusions which they declare

Mater Ecclesia, nec unquam ab eo sensu, altioris intelligentiae specie et nomine, recedendum (Concil. Vatic.).

(Hence, too, that sense of sacred dogmas is always to be retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once defined, nor must it ever be discarded under the pretext of a clearer understanding.)

[1] "Crescat igitur et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum, quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius Ecclesiae, aetatum et saeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia, sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia" (ibid.).

(Therefore let the understanding, the knowledge, the wisdom of each and all, of every individual man and of the universal Church, in every age and in every generation, increase and go forward with abundant fruit; but let it none the less be consistent with itself, adhering to the same dogma, and the same understanding and expression of that dogma.)

to be reached by the impartial researches of history: "The conclusions of this method, applied to the history of Catholicism, are simply disastrous to the old theological positions. Instead of finding from the first the germs at least of those dogmatic affirmations formulated by Church authority in the course of ages, we have found a sort of religion which was originally formless and undogmatic, and which came gradually to develop in the direction of definite forms of thought and ritual owing to the requirements of general intercourse and to the need of giving abstract expression to the principles which should shape the religious activity of the faithful. And this was effected partly by the efforts of Christian thinkers and partly by the negation of the positions adopted by heretics. The Gospel message could never have lived and spread abroad in its primitive spiritual simplicity." [1]

To the same effect writes Fr. Tyrrell: "In its first form the Christian revelation was altogether apocalyptic, prophetic, visionary

[1] *Il programma*, p. 79; Engl. transl., p. 93.

in character. The ethical teaching of the Gospel was not considered as part of it, or as in any wise new. The kingdom of heaven, its nature, the circumstances of its advent—this was the 'good news.'"[1]

Still, life and thought must go on. The first Christian experience demanded interpretation. This, for an example, is how the authors of the *Programma* sketch for us the successive adaptations which the first conception of Christ was made to undergo: "The Acts (ii. 22), echoing the primitive Christian teaching, speak of Jesus as 'A man to whom God has borne witness by miracles and wonders and signs wrought by His means.' He is the Messiah upon whom an ignominious death has conferred heavenly glory, and who must soon return to inaugurate His kingdom. Such was the simple and deep faith of the first disciples. But Christ has called all the members of the human family to be sons of God, and has presented Himself as their archetype. He

[1] "The Rights and Limits of Theology" (*Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1905); *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 211.

is, therefore, Himself pre-eminently the Son of God, according to the prophetic tradition which attributes that dignity to the Messiah. . . . The translation of the Hebrew conception of the Messiah into the Platonic idea of the Logos marks a culminating point in the theological elaboration. Here the Messiah dreamt of by souls anxiously awaiting the redemption of Israel was identified with the abstract notion, essentially Hellenic, of a cosmic intermediary between the world and the Supreme Being. A Hebrew conception possessing certain moral and religious values, but otherwise unmeaning for the Hellenic mind, was translated into Alexandrine terminology in such a way as to retain those values in another and a more metaphysical setting." [1]

A Christian whose faith is deep-rooted, but who has not been inoculated with this fugitive theology, will be somewhat discon-

[1] *Il programma*, pp. 81–3 ; Engl. transl., pp. 96–9. The part omitted concerns the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. A few pages before is an analogous explanation of the successive adaptation of Christology.

certed by explanations such as these. He would fain ask the authors: Of all these beliefs you have enumerated, which in matter of fact is true? Is it the "simple and deep faith" of the first disciples? Is it the Messianic belief of the Jews? Is it the metaphysics of the Greeks? They would answer that all are true, precisely on the same ground, for all possess the same "moral and religious values." Has the inquirer so soon forgotten that "for each one of us our life is the only absolute, and that all that feeds it and expands it more fruitfully has, in like manner, the value of something absolute"?

Thus, under this medley of symbols, the faith itself remains always one and the same. There is no longer need, in consequence, to speak of progress of dogma; so that Modernists flatter themselves that they are more orthodox than their rivals, perhaps even more than the Vatican Council itself.[1]

[1] *Programma*, p. 90; Engl. transl., pp. 108, 109. Cf. G. Tyrrell, "Théologisme" (*Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, July 15, 1907, pp. 522, 523).

"Everything in the history of Christianity has changed—doctrine, hierarchy, worship; but all these changes have been providential means for the preservation of the Gospel-spirit, which has remained unchanged through the ages. Of course the scholastics and the Fathers at Trent came into a much richer theological heritage than the Christians of the first century; but the religious experience, that in virtue of which they were Christians, was the same for them all. And for us to-day it is likewise the same, although it moves but slowly towards a new self-formation, owing to the sway, no longer intellectual but simply juridical, of scholasticism, which has won the surely anomalous position of an 'official' philosophy. The formulations of the past and of the future have been, and will be, equally legitimate, provided they faithfully respect the growing needs of evangelical piety, ever eager to find in reflex thought a better instrument for its own preservation and utterance."

Their respective ideas on the truth of

Christian dogma define the attitude of Catholic and Modernist towards the symbols of faith which the Church imposes on her children. The Catholic knows that the divine truths revealed to him infinitely surpass his understanding. He knows that the very formulas which the Church puts before him are quite inadequate to their object. Still, he adheres to them with all his soul, knowing as he does that they alone infallibly light up his course to God. According as he advances he perceives that he draws ever nearer to the light; and this Credo, so simple in itself, and to the unbeliever so jejune, appears to him every day more full of truth and life. He does not stop at the symbolic representations which it includes;[1] neither does he fetter his faith to the human systems which some of its expressions suggest.[2] He goes straight to

[1] An expression of this kind is seen, for example, in the *descent* into hell; the Catholic is not bound to believe that hell is beneath the earth, and that our Lord *went actually down* to it.

[2] For example, several definitions of Councils concerning the sacraments have been given in terms of

the sense which the Church has given once for all to her formulations, and which her authorized teaching enables him to know.

the theory of matter and form. In accepting these definitions the Catholic does not commit himself to accepting the physics of Aristotle. The principle which should guide us in this matter is the regulation formulated by the Christian Council given above: ". . . dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit Sancta Mater Ecclesia." Now, it is certain that even when the Church makes use of terms drawn from particular philosophical or theological systems, she does not employ them in all the strictness of their technical sense, and in consequence does not bind our faith to any philosophic system. Hence we find one such as Franzelin (*de Eucharistia*, p. 293), after having explained the theory of "accidents," concludes his proposition on the eucharistic species as follows: "Veritas theologica physicae realitatis specierum ab hac aut quavis alia speciali explicatione philosophica modi non pendet; gratulabimur ergo ei, qui modum aptiorem et probabiliorem nos docuerit, dummodo reipsa sit integrae veritatis theologicae explicatio." (The theological truth of the physical reality of the species does not depend on this or any other particular philosophical explanation of how it happens; we shall then be indebted to any one who will give us a more apt and more likely theory, of

This adherence to dogma he looks upon as of obligation, and therefore as necessary for salvation. He does not, indeed, forget that God, who wills the salvation of all, exacts from no one more than he can give, and that He excuses the invincible ignorance of those who, through no fault of their own, do not accept the truths of revelation. At the same time he also knows that whoever has once sufficiently grasped the meaning and the proof of revelation, is bound to give it his allegiance, for the withdrawal of which he can never thenceforward have any legitimate excuse.

For the Modernist, on the contrary, the dogmatic formulas which the Church offers to the faithful are not unchangeable decisions. They are the more or less successful expression of the religious experience of Christians. They contain both truth and error; they are a mine in which the gold is much mixed

long as it explains the whole theological truth.) On this point, which needs careful examination, and cannot be dismissed in a few lines, cf. two articles in the *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, May 15, 1907, pp. 194-97; July 15, 1907, pp. 527-35.

with dross, though perhaps the best we can hope for in this world.[1]

They are good and beneficial to the soul, in so far as they arouse and foster the religious sentiment. Moreover, the most excellent of them are in no case intellectual declarations, which deceive us into thinking we understand, but with which, once we have seen through the delusion, the soul is soon weary; they belong to the class of recognized symbols, which, without pretending to fathom a mystery, bring it home to the soul. "The stories of the birth of Christ," writes Sabatier, "are only poetry; yet how much more religious and more true is this poetry than all the definitions of the formula, *Quicunque !* "[2]

[1] Cf. G. Tyrrell. *A Much-abused Letter*, p. 78 sqq.

[2] *Esquisse*, p. 270. Cf. Buisson, *Libre pensée et Protestantisme libéral*, p. 33. "In our eyes the great value of the few words to which the authentic teaching of Christ is reduced consists in their familiar figures, allegories, parables, and metaphors which speak to the heart and the imagination, but which utterly refuse to admit of any dogmatic crystalization. God is a "Father," men are His "children." How can a rigid theology be extracted from the words "father" and "child"? How can they even

Fr. Tyrrell thus describes the *Credo* that he fashions for himself in imagination: "In an ideal state of things, to which we may ever approximate, we ought to find a living and growing creed or body of dogmas and mysteries reflecting and embodying the spiritual growth and development of the community; one, not with the coherence of a logical system, and according to the letter-value of its statements and articles, but with the coherence of divers manifestations of one and the same spirit; a living, flexible creed that represents the present spiritual needs of the average, the past needs of the more progressive, the future needs of the less progressive members of the Church." [1]

be given a precise sense or a definition according to rule? Nevertheless they are perfectly intelligible to the feelings. . . ." In the same sense Fr. Tyrrell, when studying the expression of revelation, seems to set "pure imagery," whose value is in great part permanent, in opposition to the categories or intellectual concepts which he considers untrustworthy. ("Théologisme," *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, July 15, 1906, p. 510; reproduced in *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 328; cf. *Lex Credendi*, p. 143, 144).

[1] "The Rights and Limits of Theology" (*Quarterly*

The Christian will respect these formularies, and will make use of them, because, besides the help he may find in them for his spiritual life, he owes to them his union with Christians of all nations and all times. Still, it is all important that they should be a help to him and not a burthen. It may happen, and, according to many Modernists in matter of fact it has happened, that the greater part

Review, p. 488; *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 237). To appreciate fully the significance of this doctrine, it should be compared with the following judgement of a Protestant theologian: "In the Catholic sense of the word, dogma is an officially defined belief, promulgated and imposed by a competent authority, that is, by the Church. It goes without saying that such an idea could not be admitted as it stands by Protestants. The very spirit of the Reformation is in formal opposition to the idea of a doctrine which can be imposed from without, no matter by what authority. Protestant dogma should be, as Lobstein says, the scientific expression and affirmation of the Protestant faith, in a manner which answers to the interests of a particular period and a particular generation" (M. Goguel, *W. Herrmann*, p. 283). Between these two ideas of dogma, so rightly set in opposition one to another, it is not difficult to see to which Fr. Tyrrell inclines.

of the Church's formularies may to-day become a dead letter. Hitherto they have served to give life to faith because they have been in harmony with the religious needs and intellectual conditions of Christians of other times. To-day, we are told, they have lost all meaning for us; we can no longer think them nor live them. What, then, can the Christian do but, so far as it is in his power, bring his influence to bear upon the Church that she may tear from herself this dead parasitic plant which is throttling Christianity itself? If he cannot do that, at least he will assert, for himself and for all whom he can affect, full Christian liberty, and snap the fetters which theology has the audacity to impose upon him.[1]

This practical attitude, which is perfectly in accord with the rest of the system, is the very attitude of Protestants, and cannot be mistaken. To make it the more evident, let us recall once more the Catholic doctrine,

[1] Tyrrell, *A Much-abused Letter*, pp. 87 sqq.; "Rights and Limits of Theology" (*Quarterly Review*, p. 490; toned down in *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 239).

and see what according to it is the relation between the two rules of faith—the individual conscience and the authority of the Church.

The duty of faith, like every other duty, is made known to every man by his conscience. If God has spoken, the obligation of believing Him is obvious, no less than the obligation of paying Him obedience and love. But by what criterion are we able to discern the word of God? Is it conscience, or is it an external authority?

It is evident that a question such as this can only occur to one who has already given his adherence to an external authority, in which at the same time he acknowledges the authority of God. If no such authority exists for him, one only criterion of faith, his conscience, remains; to him is applicable what St. Paul said of the pagans: "Ipsi sibi sunt lex."[1] Should he hear mention of Christ and of his Church, still his only means of discerning the truth of their message will be divine grace and his personal lights. Authority cannot fix his choice; it can only

[1] They are a law unto themselves.

bring him in touch with Christian truth, help him to grasp the claim she has upon his belief, pray God to enlighten him, and leave him in the hands of his own counsel.

But the moment he has acknowledged in the Catholic Church the authorized interpreter of the word of God, by that very act he submits his faith to all the doctrine she offers him. It now becomes his duty to accept many dogmas without being able to fathom for himself their intrinsic truth, and before feeling their beneficial influence upon his life. His conscience is still a living voice as before; it still declares his obligation to believe in the various Christian dogmas; but it is now the echo of the voice of the Church and no more, its rule is subjected to a higher, the Church's magisterium, in which it venerates the authority of God Himself. "My brethren," said Newman to the Anglicans of Birmingham, "you will tell me that, if all doubt is to cease when you become Catholics, you ought to be very sure that the Church is from God before you join it. You speak truly; no one should enter

the Church without a firm purpose of taking her word in all matters of doctrine and morals, and that, on the ground of her coming directly from the God of Truth. You must look the matter in the face and count the cost. If you do not come in this spirit, you may as well not come at all." [1]

The Modernist cannot admit this principle; the whole of his theology rejects it. Revelation is for him, as we have seen, strictly individual, incommunicable. He cannot then admit that an external authority, however sacred, may come between himself and God, to notify to him a revelation known only to himself, or even to give it her interpretation. "The religious-minded Catholic, imbued with modern culture, holds as true what the love of God urges him to accept: he holds it as true, not because God, considered as an external authority, has said it, but because

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, XI. *Faith and Doubt*. Some have thought they recognized in the Modernist doctrine of "the primacy of the conscience" a consequence of Newman's doctrine; this has been shown to be a misunderstanding (*Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, March 1, 1907, pp. 667–75).

the voice is at the same time his own voice, and he is in intimate union with God." [1]

Dogma in its turn is no more than an intellectual representation aroused by religious emotion, and adapted to awaken that emotion in other consciences. It is not infallibly true; therefore it cannot be imposed as of faith. And, as its usefulness is a measure of its value, it should be used by each one according to the needs of his conscience. Hence the rule formulated by Samuel Vincent, one of the precursors of Liberal Protestantism in France: "Any dogma which fails to stir an echo in the soul, which makes it give back no sound, is not necessary for salvation." [2] Fr. Tyrrell writes in the same strain: "Our religious experience, being the sense of the dynamic relationship obtaining between our spirit and the Universal Spirit, affords us a practical criterion in virtue of which we can set aside any theory incon-

[1] Dr. K. Gebert, *Katholischer Glaube*, p. 76.

[2] Quoted by A. N. Bertrand, *La Pensée réligieuse au sein du Protestantisme libéral*, p. 22.

sistent with such experience";[1] and to a Catholic, who complained of being unable to adhere to the official teaching of the Church, he wrote: "If you can live on the undeveloped germ, you may dispense with the developments, especially if they but puzzle and hinder you."[2] Not long ago, in the introduction to his last book, he explained his teaching with still greater precision: "Deferential within the limits of conscience and sincerity to the official interpreters of [the Church's] mind [the pioneers of progress] must, nevertheless, interpret such interpretations in accordance with the still higher and highest canon of Catholic truth—with the mind of Christ. It is He who sends us to them; not they who send us to Him. He is our first and our highest authority. Were they to forbid the appeal, their own dependent authority would be at an end."[3]

This appeal, from the Pope to Christ or to the Holy Spirit, is too obviously Protestant

[1] *Quarterly Review*, October, 1905, p. 483. *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 230.

[2] *A Much-abused Letter*, p. 86.

[3] *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 19.

not to startle a Catholic mind. Trusting in the promises of Christ, and obedient to His commandments, the Catholic knows that in hearkening to the teaching of the Pope he hearkens to the teaching of Christ; that in despising the teaching of the Pope, he despises also the teaching of Christ. He knows that the Christian is taught by God, not only individually and in the silence of his conscience, but also collectively by the official magisterium of his Church. And here before all let it be observed that the Protestant principle above deduced is the unavoidable consequence of the whole system. If revelation is immediately communicated to each individual soul, if it is essentially no more than a religious emotion, if dogma is only a human conception, more or less intimately bound up with this emotion, and more or less advantageous to our life, if its formulary is only a symbol and has none but a practical value, there is no longer room or need for an infallible dogmatic authority. In other words, whoever adheres to a philosophy of religion, such as Sabatier expounds in his *Esquisse*,

cannot refuse the alternative he offers between the religion of authority and the religion of the spirit, nor can he come to any but his conclusion.

Under these circumstances the Church may still be regarded as a beneficial institution. She transmits to us the religious experience of the past, and unites us one to another by the profession of the same formularies and by the celebration of the same rites. With perfect justice she claims from us an attitude of deference and respect for her hierarchy and her definitions. In a word, she still remains a government, and assumes that we, even at the cost of some sacrifice, will conform our actions to her regulations. But she is no longer the Body of Christ, in which and by which all grace is communicated from the head to the members.

Hence the principle, unhappily laid down of late by Fr. Tyrrell and the authors of the *Programma*, of "Salutary Excommunication": "Not only has excommunication been stripped for the most part of the terrors it possessed in the Middle Ages, terrors tem-

poral and spiritual, but what is more, when reasons of conscience have occasioned it, the sacrifice which it demands makes it in a sense attractive for heroic hearts, and honourable in the eyes of a small number whose judgement, after all, is the only one we care for. It is a baptism of fire, a means of sanctification for religious men. I will say more: the circumstances in the midst of which the Church is at present engaged are such that to prefer to undergo excommunication rather than retract becomes a strict duty for an increasing number of more intelligent and sincere Catholics, to say nothing of the considerable number of those who, while disposed to become proselytes, yet admit, with certain indispensable reservations, the rights of the Roman Communion to their entire submission."[1]

[1] *Grande Revue*, October 10, 1907, p. 666.

CHAPTER III

The Religious Consequences of Modernism

FROM what has been already said a sufficiently clear idea may be gathered of the consequences of this system. Still it will not be out of place to dwell somewhat longer on them here; Modernists proclaim themselves mistrustful of logic, but are fond of judging trees by their fruits. Quite recently the authors of the Italian manifesto invited us to apply this test; profiting by the anonymity which hid their modest blushes they told us (p. 139) they were "conscious of being the most ardent champions of [the Church's] universal honour,"[1]

[1] Engl. transl., p. 170.

"its most devoted and loving sons," the representatives "of the purest traditions of Christianity."

To carry the discussion along these lines is a very difficult matter. Were it a question of estimating the fundamental moral and religious worth of the authors of the movement, we should give up the task without hesitation.

At the opening of his Encyclical, the Pope has been careful to reserve to the judgement of God the intentions of the Modernists; a like reserve is yet more incumbent upon us. Still there seems to remain the right to criticize objective positions freely; we have a right to show, if we hold it to be true, that the Modernist doctrines make for the destruction of Christian life.

And in the first place it comes as a surprise, and that a painful one, how often the "Non sum sicut ceteri hominum"[1] occurs among their writings. Modernists speak of themselves as "the most intelligent and best

[1] I am not as the rest of men.

educated," "the most ardently sincere, the most disinterested," "the most deeply religious," "with the largest share of the Gospel spirit," &c.—expressions not usually found on the lips of true Catholic reformers, such as St. Bernard or St. Francis of Assisi.

Still more astonishing than these somewhat ingenuous hymns of praise, is the spirit of caste, the preference given to the judgement of a small group of scholars rather than to the decisions of the whole Christian hierarchy, or to the sense of the faithful at large. They tell us that the wider Catholicism—that of Erasmus [1]—"has always been

[1] I cannot refrain from remarking on this appeal to Erasmus, so often on the lips of certain Modernists. It is a sad thing to see the author of *Hard Sayings* and *Nova et Vetera* now claiming Erasmus and Colet as the forefathers of his Christian life (cf. *Times*, October 1, 1907); and no less sad to listen to his tone, hitherto so truly and profoundly religious, becoming, under the influence of Modernism, so bitter, so sarcastic, and sometimes so violent. The change—and it is not the only example—is a significant revelation to those who wish to see the religious bearing of the movement.

represented by a feeble and oppressed minority, and branded with the disapprobation of the reigning average. The same might be said of the prophets of Israel and of the pioneers of progress in every department of human life. They do not claim to represent the average, or to speak in its name. They claim to see more deeply into the mind of the Church, and to understand its implications more clearly, to foresee its future developments more distinctly, and, therefore, to be not less but more loyal than the average to the spirit of Christ, of which she is the imperfect embodiment."[1] And in another place: "When it is clear that a counter-belief is gaining ground in such a way that it represents the 'consensus' of the future; when the same conclusion is reached simultaneously and independently by different thinkers, one may, and at times one ought, to follow the belief that lives in the spirit (however small the number of its supporters) rather than

[1] Tyrrell, *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 19.

that which stagnates in the formula (however vast the multitude of its passive adherents)."[1]

It is not difficult to see how deceptive is this principle. When the same current of philosophy draws men on all sides to the same negations it need not surprise us that "the same conclusion is reached simultaneously and independently by different thinkers"; but it is somewhat gratuitous to see in this agreement a sign of the action of the Holy Spirit and a presage of the faith of to-morrow. As for this confidence in a select body of thinkers and this mistrust of the "average" of Christianity, it is un-Catholic in spirit, and sounds like an echo of that saying of the Pharisees preserved for us in the Gospel: "Turba haec, quae non novit legem, maledicti sunt."[2] The Catholic is not so fastidious or scornful; he recognizes in this world two only assured rules of faith, the decisions of doctrinal authority

[1] *Scylla ana Charybdis*, p. 369.

[2] This multitude that knoweth not the law is accursed.

and the sense of the Christian people. He repeats with St. Paulinus of Nola: "De omnium fidelium ore pendeamus, quia in omnem fidelem spiritus Dei spirat." [1]

Modernists, again, reiterate that they alone are loyal among Catholic scholars, they alone sincere; and certainly we are tired of listening to these assertions of sincerity, hawked about as they often are in clandestine publications, or spread abroad in anonymous or pseudonymous brochures. It may be worth our while to go into this matter more deeply, and see into what we are being drawn under pretext of sincerity.

Their desire is, they tell us, to work without any prejudice; and by that they mean without dogmatic control, without concern for the rule of faith. Hence it often comes about that, thanks to the insufficiency of historic exegetic data, or to the faultiness of their methods, we are led to some conclusion which faith cannot accept; then, if we per-

[1] Epist. xxiii. 25 (P. L., lxi. 281). (Let us depend upon the voice of all the faithful, because into every faithful soul the spirit of God is breathed.)

sist in our course, either faith must yield or we can only preserve it by being illogical. At the end of these proceedings, supposed to be the only sincere and honest course, we find ourselves caught in a situation of utter insincerity, one in which the student must deny in the name of science what as a Christian he professes, and must labour to misinterpret the *Credo* he repeats.

The conflict is too painful to last long. Of the two opposing concepts, rising from belief and science, one must of necessity yield. If belief gives way, then what becomes of faith? To this heartrending question different answers are suggested by Liberals of different creeds. Some would reserve certain privileged beliefs which alone they consider essential to the faith. Thus Mr. Rashdall, some few years ago, defined the doctrinal position of the Broad Church party in these words: "In modern language, I think we may say that we adhere to the three great essentials of the Christian religion—belief in a personal God, in a personal immortality, and (while not limiting

the idea of revelation to the Old and New Testaments) in a unique and paramount revelation of God in the historic Christ." [1] This is almost verbatim the language of the fundamental articles so dear to the old reformers.

The majority of Liberals, however, repudiate this position; they accept outright the logical consequences of their principles. The Christian religion does not consist in adherence to dogmas, but in the right directing of the heart and conscience. Here they join hands with fideists, who teach "salvation by faith independently of all beliefs," and this certainly appears to be the only attitude a Modernist can logically hold. Have they not repeated again and again that faith, being of a different order from science, has nothing to fear from its conclusions, whatever those conclusions might turn out to be? Have they not told us that past and future formularies have been and will be equally legitimate, provided they faithfully respect "the needs of evangelical religion"?

[1] *Christus in Ecclesia*, p. 385.

Or, again, that "the main question is not, What does a man believe? but, How does he believe?"[1]

We would venture to urge them further. We would ask, for example, whether it were possible to remain a Christian while one disbelieved even in the existence of Christ? The question is no mere supposition; we know that in the Lutheran Church pastors have not shrunk from this denial. Quite recently an American professor, Mr. W. B. Smith, wrote a book to prove that Christ never existed,[2] and the learned professor, M. Schmiedel, of Zurich, honoured it with a preface of approval. Fideist Protestants, again, do not shrink from such a result, but extend even to this point their principle of the mutual independence of science and faith.[3] How Catholic Modernists, if they

[1] Gebert, *Katholischer Glaube*, p. 74.

[2] *Die Vorchristliche Jesus nebst weiteren Vorstudien zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums* (Giessen, 1906).

[3] "Is faith reconcilable with absence of all belief in Jesus Christ? To put an extreme case, can a man who believes that Christ never existed still possess

would be logical and sincere, can avoid this same conclusion it is difficult to see. But further, whoever maintains this principle should be logical to the end and call himself simply a freethinker; at any rate he should be sincere, and not allow his conduct to support a belief he no longer shares.

Some four years ago M. F. Buisson wrote to the readers of the *Protestant:* "If you have not, and do not wish to have, either *Credo*, or catechism, or Pope, or council, if you do not believe in the infallibility of either a man or a book, or in the immortality of any doctrine or of any institution,

faith unto salvation? M. Ménégoz dares to answer 'Yes'; an answer which would certainly have astonished St. Paul. According to this professor, if a man who has given his heart to God has a mind so distorted as to call into doubt the whole history of Christ and His very existence, God will not condemn him for this mental eccentricity. He adds, not without a certain frivolity: In paradise this oddity would see that he had been deceived, and would cast himself at the feet of the Lord" (Babut, *De la notion biblique et de la notion symbolo-fidéisté de la foi justifiante*, quoted by Doumergue, *Les Étapes du fidéisme*, p. 16, note 1).

have the courage of your convictions, and call yourselves what you are—freethinkers. It is possible for you to be religious freethinkers; it is only to Catholic ears that the words are contradictory. It will still be true that you belong out-and-out to what Sainte-Beuve called the great diocese of common-sense. Be logical and admit it. But it is more, much more, than logic that obliges you to take your proper place; common honesty urges you to it. The worst danger which Liberal Protestantism incurs, its only serious danger—but it is a deadly one—is the charge of want of sincerity just because it has failed in precision. There is only one escape from this: that is, to put an end to all equivocation by leaving the ministry frankly and unmistakably."[1]

No doubt this demand directly affects Protestants and no more, but do not Catholic progressives risk being caught in the like illogicality? Without considering what they may become, we have the right to ask them whether their conduct is in conformity with

[1] *Libre pensée et Protestantisme libéral*, p. 44.

their own principles. They maintain that no dogmatic formulary, even if defined, is infallibly true; they allow to dogma no absolute truth except in so far as it nourishes our religious life. Nevertheless they profess the greatest reverence for these dogmatic declarations; they hold them to be sacrosanct, and worthy of all respect. But how do they justify this attitude? Whatever else may be said of it, a dogma is not a sacrament; a definition of the Church is not a simple rite; if they recognize no truth-value in the thing itself, why do they repeat it? Why do they hold it to be holy? We are told that dogmatic formularies are beneficial and preservative; but how? Not, surely, like magic spells, by the mere pronunciation of the words; it comes, then, from the meaning they bear, from the judgement they convey, and if it is claimed that this intellectual judgement contains no absolute and infallible truth, by what right, pray, is the formulary imposed upon us?

Words convey some sense; I cannot be made to repeat "Christ is God," as I can

have prescribed for me baptismal ablution or the breaking of bread, simply to develop my religious life, and to unite it by a rite and an exterior sign to the Christian Society.[1] If Christ is not really God, according to the true and natural sense of the words, the Church has neither the right to impose the formulary upon me, nor have I the right to repeat it; to do so would be a tyranny on one side, on the other a lie.

Still, let us assume that Modernists know how always to maintain a right attitude towards their beliefs, and that they never repeat formularies which are not the sincere and natural expression of their faith. There still remains another question, and it is the most momentous of all. What becomes

[1] "Amongst them [the dogmas] some, like the divinity of Christ, are fundamental in the sense that certain rites (baptism, or the breaking of bread) are fundamental, binding ages and nations together, making a permanent core round which is clustered a body of variable usages, and serving as an outward and effectual sign of an all-pervading unity of the inward spirit" (G. Tyrrell, "The Rights and Limits of Theology," *Quarterly Review*, p. 486. Cf. *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 234).

of faith and religious life under this new system?

On the critical day when for the first time a soul accepts doctrinal Liberalism, it seems to itself to have found therein salvation. The struggle between science and faith has been too great an agony for it not to welcome an expedient which sets it free; and as the whole religious energies of the soul forsake intellectual research in despair and concentrate upon the affective life, it sometimes happens that the religious sentiment thus takes on a colour, morbid beyond question, but still for the moment more resembling life. This impoverishment of mind is a dangerous state. When the intellect has ceased to believe, the soul soon finds prayer impossible. To whom can one pray? To Christ? That demands belief in His Divinity, or at least in His continued existence.[1] To God? For that we need

[1] M. P. Stapfer endeavours to justify prayer to Christ by the following "hypothesis": "A likely enough hypothesis, in favour in our time, considers that life beyond the grave is not the natural and universal condition of mankind, that this privilege

to believe that He is personal, and that between Him and us there can be an exchange of thought and love.[1]

belongs only to chosen souls who have merited it by triumphing, through effort of their own, over the evil which reigns in this world, and over all the obstacles that have opposed them, through their command of matter and the dominion of the mind. But by whom have the instincts of the lower nature been more trampled upon than by the Divine Man who came to preach to the world 'the new birth,' charity, love, and sacrifice? . . . What sectarian and pedantic rigorism, then, it is to call that prayer idolatry which naturally rises in our hearts towards Him!" ("La Crise des croyances religieuses," in the *Bibliothèque universelle de Lausanne*, July, 1905, pp. 87, 88.)

[1] M. F. Buisson, after discussing the teaching of M. J. Réville (*Le Protestantisme libéral*, p. 58) on the "Living God," thus concludes: "The *Credo* of Protestantism does not even include faith in a personal God. And as for the relation between man and God, which is the very object and foundation of religion, M. Réville says expressly in a note (p. 59): 'The absolute sovereignty of God, and the absolute dependence of man upon God, is no more than what is understood in modern science by the sovereignty of the order of the universe. It is at that point that faith and science meet.' They meet, yes, but by an equivocation, as our adversaries would say. But it is

What remains after this of Christianity but a mere veneration, justified by nothing but custom, for religious symbols which hitherto have fostered the faith and which remain rich in memories and no more? And this veneration itself, given to Christian merely in preference to Buddhistic symbols, once faith no longer justifies it, will eke out a precarious existence.[1]

not so: for there is no equivocation in a statement which does not aim at mathematical precision, but merely at an image, a kind of approximation, which equally admits of two or more versions or different explanations of the same fact" (*Libre pensée et Protestantisme liberal*, p. 36).

[1] In 1869 M. F. Buisson wrote: "What is the mission of liberal Protestantism? It is to bid men to distinguish between the two elements of traditional Christianity. All of you, men of science and reason —naturalists, physicians, geologists, historians, critics —who can no longer admit the theology and the legends with which the Church has surrounded Christ, refuse your allegiance, and you will be no less lawful Christians. Throw down this exterior scaffolding; the real building within these fragile and makeshift constructions, when exposed to view, will be seen to be only the more beautiful. Undermine, destroy, demolish all orthodoxy, you will not have done thereby the least harm to the

Last year M. Schmiedel concluded an address delivered before the Liberal Protestants of Switzerland in these terms: "Let me add a word on the bearing of the person of Christ upon personal devotion. If in the full liberty of our researches we

true Christianity, the Christianity of the Gospel and of Christ. For that Christianity is of a wholly moral order; it is built on the rock of conscience, and not on the quicksand of any system whatsoever." When rewriting this passage some four years ago in his pamphlet on *Freethought* (p. 53, note 1), M. F. Buisson added: "This passage clearly contains, as far as words go, certain general statements in favour of Christianity which I could not now reassert without adding many reservations forced upon me by the progress of religious criticism, such as are expressly made by M. Sabatier and M. Albert Réville, for example. The duty of freethought, in religion as in philosophy, is to follow the lead of science and to keep a mind open to every fresh lesson that experience, study, or reflection may supply." This declaration does honour to its writer, and cannot surprise any one but one may suspect that the page written in 1869 —so like, unhappily, to what we hear to-day around us—gave sufficient indication of the event, in spite of its seemingly Christian fervour. Faith ill survives the death of fixed beliefs.

adhere, as I have done, to certain points which others do not accept, this matters nothing to our attitude of worship. For my part, I would not even assert that Jesus Christ is unique; for this either says nothing—every man is unique in some respect—or it says too much. The real core of my religious being would suffer no injury were I to be persuaded to-day that Christ never existed. It might be that I should no longer be able to fix my affection on Him as a real man; but I should know that all the devotion that has long been mine would not be lost, merely because I could no longer fix it on Him. . . . But as an historian I can say that this hypothesis is improbable. Neither would my religious life be troubled if Christ appeared to me to be no more than an enthusiastic pretender to the title of Messiah, or if I saw in Him some other feature which could not receive my support. But as an historian I hold as probable what I have already explained. Nor, again, has my devotion any need to see in Christ an

absolutely perfect model, and I should not be disturbed did I discover another who surpassed Him; indeed, there can be no doubt that in some respects He has been surpassed. But hitherto no one has shown me a man who has been greater than Christ in that which makes His peculiar worth." [1]

Once more this is the logical position; but whoever holds such views as these is no longer a Christian.

The consequences of doctrinal Liberalism, serious though they are for individuals who profess it, are still more serious for the creeds which tolerate it. A Church is practically an assembly of believers, and it should be able to express the faith of its members in a formulary common to all; what then will become of it if it cannot guarantee among either its members or its ministers any uniformity of beliefs? M. Ménégoz thus presents in his own fashion both the problem and his answer: "A Church without a creed, such

[1] *Die Person Jesu im streite der Meinungen der Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 29.

as is dreamt of by certain Liberal idealists, is a chimera, while a Church such as certain champions of orthodoxy long for, whose members could be held to the same beliefs, would contain within itself the germs of dissolution. Only let our reformed brethren preserve at the root of their respective ecclesiastical organizations their historical creeds —be they ancient or modern—let them authorize their interpretation in the spirit of faith and liberty which belonged to the reformers, and they will have secured peace within the Church, and lifted a weight from many a conscience which oppresses men the more, the more conscientious they are." [1]

M. Ménégoz then refers to the anguish with which young clerics, above all the best among them, subscribe to their confessions of faith when they take service in the Church, and he thinks that "symbolo-fideism" alone can set free their consciences.

It must be confessed that this situation is an extremely painful one, but who does not

[1] "Le Fidéisme et la Notion de la foi" (*Revue de théologie et des questions religieuses*," July, 1905, p. 74).

see that the remedy is worse than the disease? In the eyes of the waverer, to see the Churches making professions of faith and trying to evade their import, compelling their ministers to subscribe to a solemn and public engagement which they may afterwards interpret as they please, is nothing short of a scandal. Let me repeat here a criticism which I have had occasion to cite elsewhere. Mr. Jacks, the editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, writes: "A passion for vague engagements seems to have possessed the intellect of the Churches. In the sphere of religious belief men may pledge themselves to all sorts of issues, without feeling committed either to this or that. A liberty of private interpretation is claimed for solemn and public undertakings. Language, when applied to the expression of religious belief, seems to have a different set of values from those carried in other departments of of thought. Elsewhere words are supposed to convey something: here they may convey almost anything. Not only has it become impossible to say what a particular dogma means, but highly difficult to say what it

does not mean; for there is hardly a conceivable meaning which ingenuity may not contrive to fix on the words. What would happen, we may well ask, if a witness in a court of law were to indulge in the irresponsible use of language which is now tolerated in many of the high places of religion?" [1]

Let us look well to it. If the Church were to tolerate among her members, and above all among her priests, this transient method of interpreting her dogmas, she too would come under the same seyere yet well-deserved condemnation. She has been denounced as intolerant because the decree of the Holy Office and the Encyclical itself have both bidden supporters of Modernist doctrines to be removed from professorships and the exercise of sacred orders; and those that make this protest imagine they are advocating sincerity. The authors of the *Programma* have gone so far as to compare the Holy Father to Julian the Apostate, banishing Christian teachers from the schools (p. 128). They

[1] "Church and World" (*Hibbert Journal*, October, 1906, p. 14).

would do well to reflect and ask themselves whether this kind of equivocal comparison savours of sincerity. Every one is aware that among the Modernists are men who reject the virgin conception of Christ and His resurrection, some even His divinity, rightly and strictly understood; and yet these men would have us let them come forward as ministers of the Church, and recite in an official capacity her symbol: "Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero . . . Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine . . . Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. . . ." [1] And they would have us commit to them the charge of teaching and interpreting the same to the faithful!

Let us also bear in mind that the faithful have rights, and of these the first is that of not being taught the faith by unbelievers. A Protestant clergyman, M. Koenig, in a report presented to the Free Evangelical Confer-

[1] God of God, light of light, true God of true God. . . . And He was made flesh by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. . . . And He arose the third day, according to the Scriptures.

ences of November, 1902, said: "We pastors, when we gather the children together, the hope of future generations, the nurseries of our Churches, are uneasy most of the time in our teaching. We feel that we walk on ground that is undermined, nay, doubly undermined, and while we repeat the old legends on which we were brought up, the feeling is lively within us that we lack sincerity and that the words we utter are not the truth." [1] It could not be otherwise in Churches which tolerate among their pastors and aspirants to holy orders freedom from all beliefs. And yet, once again, that is the ideal of the opponents of the Encyclical.

In his article of October 1st, Fr. Tyrrell wrote: "What he [the Modernist] will most deeply regret is the loss of one of the Church's greatest opportunities of proving

[1] "*De la sincerité dans l'enseignement de l'histoire sainte de l'Ancien Testament aux enfants*," p. 4 (Paris, 1903). We should add that M. Koenig is uneasy not only about the stories of the Old Testament, but also about his understanding of the Christian revelation and his appreciation of the person of Christ, in whom he sees no more than "the typical man" (p. 5).

herself the saviour of the nations. Rarely in her history had the eyes of all been waiting upon her more expectantly, in the hope that she might have bread for the starving millions, for those who are troubled by that vague hunger for God on which the Encyclical pours such scorn. Protestantism, in its best thinkers and representatives, had grown dissatisfied with its rude antithesis to Catholicism, and was beginning to wonder whether Rome too had not grown dissatisfied with her rigid medievalism. The 'Modernist' movement had quickened a thousand dim dreams of reunion into enthusiastic hopes. When lo! Pius X comes forward with a stone in one hand and a scorpion in the other."

A Catholic, even if he overlooks the insult offered in the concluding sentence, may easily recognize in this whole passage narrow human opinion sitting in judgement and condemning divine thought. It is true that millions of souls are dying of hunger and are fixing their gaze upon Rome, but what will satisfy them short of the word of God? On every

side the Churches are renouncing their claims to teach, and are setting aside as rotten barriers the creeds which have hitherto held them apart. Some already hail the re-establishment of the great union of Christendom, and call upon Rome to renounce, like the rest, her intransigent attitude that she may join the others. But Rome does not leave her fastness. She remains upon her holy mountain like a watch-tower raised among the nations. She knows that she may not desert her post, for she is the witness of God and the light of the world.

APPENDIX

The Mind of St. Augustine on Excommunication

We notice, not without some astonishment, that in the *Grande Revue* (October 10, 1907, p. 671), Fr. Tyrrell quotes the authority of St. Augustine in confirmation of his doctrine of "salutary excommunication." Probably readers of the *Grande Revue* are but little acquainted with the holy doctor; yet the least familiarity with his writings proves that no one more than he has ever preached the unity of the Church and the union of the hierarchy. Nevertheless Fr. Tyrrell's argument has seemed so convincing to the Italian Modernists that they have used it as the peroration of their booklet. It may, then, be worth our while to discuss it.

The text which they cite is the following (our rendering does not quite correspond with that of Fr. Tyrrell or his translator; we prefer to be more literal):

"Divine Providence often allows, owing to seditions or disturbances stirred up by carnal men, even good men to be driven out from the assembly of Christians. When for the peace of the Church such men endure this insult and injustice with all patience, and do not give their support to any novelty of heresy or schism, they furnish a lesson to mankind of the true affection and sincere charity with which God should be served. The aim of such men is either to resume their voyage when the waves have grown calmer, or if that is impossible, either because the same storm continues, or because the like or some worse would be roused if they ventured to return, they keep at least the will to help those to whose turbulent clamour they have yielded, defending unto death, and helping by their witness, without forming factious groups, that faith which they know to be found in the bosom of the Catholic

Church. These the Father seeth in secret, and in secret rewards. This kind of man seems rare, but examples are not wanting; indeed, there are more than may well be credited." [1]

After transcribing this passage Fr. Tyrrell is careful to remark that St. Augustine never retracted it. He might have added that it is not the only passage of the kind in

[1] Saepe etiam sinit divina providentia, per nonnullas nimium turbulentas carnalium hominum seditiones, expelli de congregatione christiana, etiam bonos viros. Quam contumeliam vel iniuriam suam cum patientissime pro Ecclesiae pace tulerint, neque ullas novitates vel schismatis vel haeresis moliti fuerint, docebunt homines quam vero affectu et quanta sinceritate caritatis Deo serviendum sit. Talium ergo virorum propositum est, aut sedatis remeare turbinibus; aut si id non sinantur, vel eadem tempestate perseverante, vel ne suo reditu talis aut saevior oriatur, tenent voluntatem consulendi etiam iis ipsis quorum motibus perturbationibusque cesserunt, sine ulla conventiculorum segregatione usque ad mortem defendentes, et testimonio iuvantes eam fidem quam in Ecclesia catholica praedicari sciunt. Hos coronat in occulto Pater, in occulto videns. Rarum hoc videtur genus, sed tamen exempla non desunt: imo plura sunt quam credi potest (*De vera relig.* 6, 11. P. L., xxxiv. 128).

his works :[1] but how can he see in the attitude here described that of "protesting Catholics"?

The men of whom St. Augustine is speaking are not, and have no desire to be, defenders of novelties; even when driven

[1] In the *De baptismo contra Donatistas* (1, 17, 26, P.L., xliii. 123), St. Augustine, after having spoken of the carnal men who are outside the Church, or who are only united to it by some exterior bond, and not by partaking in its life, goes on as follows: "De nullo tamen desperandum est, sive qui intus talis apparet, sive qui foris manifestius adversatur. Spirituales autem sive ad hoc ipsum pio studio proficientes, non eunt foras: quia et cum aliqua vel perversitate vel necessitate hominum videntur expelli, ibi magis probantur, quam si intus permaneant, cum adversus Ecclesiam nullatenus eriguntur sed in solida unitatis petra fortissimo caritatis robore radicantur."

(Still we must despair of no one, whether he appear to us to be within the fold, or is more clearly without and opposed to us. But spiritual men, or men who are making true and earnest effort to this end, never leave the fold; and if through some perversity or compulsion on the part of men they were to be driven out, this does but prove them more than if they remained unmolested, seeing they never rise against the Church, but remain fast bound by the unbreakable bond of charity to the solid rock of unity.)

from the assembly of Christians they still bear witness to the faith which the Catholic Church teaches. Does he follow their example who, on his own acknowledgement, has no other ambition than to promote a new belief, or, to be still more accurate, a "counter-belief," in opposition to the general belief of the Church?[1] Does he bear witness to the faith which he knows to be taught by the Church Catholic, who represents it as a parasitic plant throttling the tree of the Gospels?

For the rest, a slight knowledge of ecclesiastical history is enough to show us the bearing of the doctrine of St. Augustine. The *De vera Religione* is dated about 390, the *De Baptismo* about 400. At these dates, and for some fifty years previously, a number of deplorable abuses of power had taken place on the part of bishops, who were often unworthy, and sometimes heretical. Many excommunications had been pronounced against their own faithful subjects or their colleagues by Arian or semi-

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 369.

Arian bishops. At the close of the century Origenism and anti-Origenism had become the occasion of these disputes. In 394, St. Jerome was persecuted by his bishop, John of Jerusalem; in 400, the priest Isidore and the most revered of the monks of Egypt, were excommunicated and banished by the patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, and even St. Chrysostom had to yield to his intrigues.

In Africa abuses like these seem to have been fairly common even without any dogmatic pretext. We possess a letter of St. Augustine (ep. 250) addressed to a young bishop, Auxilius, who, to punish a certain Classicianus for a misdemeanour which he considered injurious to himself, had anathematized him and all his family. St. Augustine remarks on this occasion that these wholesale condemnations are not without precedent, but that in spite of all precedent he has never dared to pronounce one himself.[1]

[1] Audisti fortasse aliquos magni nominis sacerdotes cum domo sua quempiam anathemasse peccantium; sed forte si essent interrogati, reperirentur idonei

If, in the light of facts such as these, we read the passage above quoted, it is not difficult to grasp its significance. What advice could the holy doctor have given to the victims of these abuses of power, to Classicianus, for example, and his family, except to endure their trial with patience, to set an example of charity, and to seek reconciliation as soon as they were able, not to form separate Churches, but to defend the faith of the one Church, and to leave the issue to God, who sees all in secret?

Obviously there is no parallel between these circumstances and the circumstances of those "protesting Catholics" who have been condemned by the Pope, because they have revolted against a dogmatic decision pronounced by the highest doctrinal authority, and which the entire Church has accepted. If they would hear the opinion of St. Augustine on their own attitude, they

reddere inde rationem. Ego autem, quoniam, si quis ex me quaerat utrum recte fiat, quid ei respondeam non invenio, munquam enim hoc facere ausus sum (P. L., xxxiii. 1066).

might read with advantage what he wrote to Julian of Eclana, who refused to submit to Pope Innocent (*Contra Julian*, i. 13, P. L., xliv. 648).

And if they would realize what St. Augustine thought of the necessity under which a Catholic lies to remain united with the Church, they might read some such texts as the following, chosen from among many others.[1] In a Synodal Letter, written by him in the name of the bishops of Africa, he says: "Whoever is separated from the Catholic Church, however otherwise praiseworthy his life may seem to himself to be, is dead, for the single crime of being separated from the unity of Christ, and the anger of God is upon him" (P. L., xxxiii. 579). And again—not to conclude this discussion in terms so severe—in his homilies on St. John he writes: "We receive the Holy Spirit if we love the Church, if we are united by charity,

[1] Cf. Th. Specht, *Die Lehre von der Kirche nach dem hl. Augustin* (Paderborn, 1892), pp. 294 sqq.; Portalié, art. Augustin (*Dict. de Théol.*, i. 2409).

if we rejoice in the Catholic name and faith. Brethren, let us believe that in so far as we love the Church of Christ, in so far have we the Holy Spirit." "Accipinius ergo et nos Spiritum Sanctum, si amamus Ecclesiam, si caritate compaginamur, si catholico nomine et fide gaudemus. Credamus, fratres; quantum quisque amat Ecclesiam Christi, tantum habet Spiritum Sanctum." [1]

[1] In Io., Tract 32, 8 (P. L., xxxv. 1645).

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